

The measure of success

By DAVID SMITH

In the movie *What About Bob?*, psychiatrist Leo Marvin (Richard Dreyfuss) attempts to apply his celebrated “Baby Steps” therapy to persistent patient Bob Wiley (Bill Murray). The therapy is all about setting small, reasonable goals for oneself and tackling problems a little bit at a time. And while Bob’s baby steps often go awry (he initially takes the concept literally, using small steps to get around the office), the idea of taking them is a good one and eventually helps him in many ways.

Similarly, baby steps are necessary for PEO to reap the benefits of the establishment of a local spokesperson presence—a key component to the association’s relations with government. Our Government Liaison Program (GLP) is a grassroots effort about building ongoing relationships with local government officials. It’s about bringing awareness to them of issues affecting PEO. It’s about making sure PEO is top of mind when issues affecting the profession are being discussed at the decision-making tables. Our purpose is to have the infrastructure and relationships in place for making our views known should issues relevant to PEO arise. With this in mind, our successes can be found in building the foundation for these events to occur.

A prime example of such an achievement was reported by the GLP Subcommittee of the Grand River Chapter. In the fall, they met with Kitchener Centre MPP John Milloy to clarify PEO’s position on the then-proposed changes to the *Ontario Building Code*. They found the MPP to be receptive to the concept of building positive, constructive relations with the association, while noting that the government and PEO share the common goal of serving and protecting the public interest. They presented Milloy with a copy of PEO’s energy advisory paper, *Sorting through the Noise: A Unique Decision Making Approach for a Secure Energy Future*, as an example of how the



The Hon. Mike Colle (front row, third from left), minister of citizenship and immigration, made special mention of PEO during his speech at a Chinese community event. Also pictured are (back row, left to right) Kim Allen, P.Eng., CEO and registrar; Robert Goodings, P.Eng., PEO past-president; Michael Price, P.Eng., PEO deputy registrar, licensing and registration; (front row, left to right) Gerry Meade, P.Eng., executive member, York Chapter; Minister Colle; Joe Ng, P.Eng., founder, Joe Ng Group of Companies; Thomas Chong, P.Eng., PEO Councillor, and John Schindler, P.Eng., past chair, York Chapter.

association can partner with and further assist his government on matters of mutual interest.

In a follow-up letter, Milloy thanked the subcommittee members for meeting with him and encouraged the team to maintain ongoing contact with him on upcoming legislation. More importantly, he included a copy of a letter he sent to Ontario Attorney General Michael Bryant as well as to several of his Cabinet colleagues, outlining the details of his meeting with the GLP team and the issues that had been raised.

In this example, one meeting with a local MPP broadened the lines of communication to include five ministers and the attorney general, demonstrating the type of success that can and should be expected of our program. And we’ve received many similar stories, some of which we’ll include in future issues of this column. So please be sure to pass along information about any contact or progress with the government representatives in your area. Through our network of GLP participants, PEO is getting noticed by government officials. Baby steps will get us there.

Interested in politics?

Join the growing number of professional engineers involved in the Government Liaison Program. Through your local chapter, you will network with government decision makers to raise awareness of the self-regulating profession and its role in protecting the public. To learn more about the program and the many ways you can contribute, contact your chapter chair or David Smith, manager, communications, at dsmith@peo.on.ca or 416-840-1068. Get involved today! ✦

Engineering for Ontarians Day update

Plans are firming up for PEO’s second Engineering for Ontarians Day with MPPs at Queen’s Park, scheduled to be held April 16. The debut event in 2005 was attended by more than 170 people, including 45 MPPs and their advisors, and featured an address by Attorney General Michael Bryant. Watch PEO’s website at www.peo.on.ca for details of this year’s event as they become available.